

A SERMON OF PERSONAL TESTIMONY

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A SERMON
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One of the nights when the regular hearers left their seats to be occupied by strangers

"For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life."
Deuteronomy 32:47

THESE are among the last words of Moses before his death. He addressed the people in a most tender and affectionate manner before he went from them. "The old man eloquent" seemed as if he would never leave off, he kept on reminding the children of Israel of the goodness of God to them, and telling them what they might expect at His hands if they would but serve Him. He pleaded with all earnestness again and again, and at last used this master argument why he would have them keep the ways of God, "For," said he, "it is not a vain thing for you"—it is a most essential thing—"because it is your life."

It is very clear from this passage, that there were some people in the days of Moses, who thought that it was a vain thing to serve the Lord, yet those were very singular times, for if men rebelled against God, they were smitten with terrible sicknesses, and sometimes with sudden death. God was then so manifestly in the midst of the camp that great miracles were often wrought, and men were compelled to stand still and say, "This is the finger of God." Besides, whenever men in those days kept God's ways, they prospered.

That was the dispensation of temporal rewards and immediate punishments, yet though it was so, though the very bush in the desert glowed with the glory of the Godhead, though the mountains smoked and trembled beneath the touch of Deity, though the uplifted rod of Moses had caused the Red Sea to be divided, and had fetched water out of the flinty rock—yet even when JEHOVAH was so conspicuously with His people, there were some among them who said, "It is a vain thing to serve the LORD."

This proves that miracles will not convince men if the Gospel of Jesus Christ does not, and it also proves that if God were to make His religion a thing of eyes and hands, to be looked upon and to be handled, it would still be rejected by ungodly men, for their hearts are set against it, and they are determined not to have God or Christ to rule over them.

Seeing that men thought it a vain thing to serve God in those olden times, I do not wonder that men should think the same now, for in these days, there are not such manifest judgments upon wicked men, neither are there always such apparent rewards for the godly as there were under the Mosaic dispensation.

Nowadays, the righteous man is often sorely tried and troubled, sometimes he has more tribulation than his ungodly neighbors have, and his trials come even as the result of his serving God. On the other hand, does not the wicked man often prosper? Have we not seen him "spreading himself like a green bay tree," and covering the earth with his branches?

This is the age of faith, in which God does not show Himself as He did in the olden time, it is the dispensation of spiritual things, wherein spiritual men alone are cognizant of God's presence and working, and therefore, it is no marvel that many turn upon their heels and say, "There is nothing in religion, it is a vain thing to serve the Lord."

Now, dear friends, I am not going to argue with you about this question, but I am going to bear my testimony concerning it. In a court of law, argument goes for much, but testimony is the thing which

carries weight with the jury. They hear the evidence, and if they believe that the witnesses are honest and truthful men, they accept their testimony, and give a verdict accordingly. If they have reason to think that the witnesses are only acting a part, and speaking falsehood, they attach no importance to their evidence. I am going to give my testimony concerning the reality and blessedness of the religion of Jesus Christ our Lord, in the hope that it will convince some of you of the truth of my text, “It is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life.”

I begin by admitting that there is a great deal of so-called religion that is a vain thing, and that is nobody’s life. The religion of ceremonies is a vain thing. If any man shall tell me that, by any act of his whatsoever, he can convey grace to me, I will not believe him. If he says that, by the application of water, he creates within an infant membership with Christ, and makes that child to be an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, I will not believe him. I shall attach no more importance to what he does if he pretends to convey grace by it, than I should to the *hocus-pocus* of a gypsy, or the *abracadabra* of a magician. God does not convey His grace in that fashion, but by the working of His Spirit upon the mind, and will, and heart.

True religion is not a thing that can be conveyed by water, or by bread and wine, apart from the state of mind and heart of the person receiving it. If my religion consists in putting on a certain dress, and showing myself as a mere performer, or thinking that some good thing can come to the people by the sweetness of music, or the beauty of architecture, my religion is vain. It was not so with Christ and His apostles, they went everywhere preaching the Word, and proclaiming that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”

Then again, a religion that consists in merely subscribing to a certain creed is a vain thing. Even if that creed were perfect, yet if your religion depended upon simply believing it as a creed, it would not affect you to any real purpose. Religion is a life grounded upon belief, but salvation comes not to a man simply because he is orthodox, if that is merely a matter of the head, and all the while the heart remains unaffected, and the actions are unchanged, such a religion is a vain thing.

I have also to admit, with very great pain, that there is no doubt that a large portion of the religion of the present day—the religion that consists in a mere profession—is vain. If any man comes to this place, and subscribes to the creed that I teach, if he is baptized with the baptism of Scripture itself, and if he is a most diligent man in all his devotions—yet, if he does not truly trust in Christ, if his heart is not renewed by the Spirit of God, if his life is not a life of temperance, chastity, holiness, and godliness, his religion is vain. It matters not that you are called Christians, the name to live is nothing, you must be spiritually alive. As our Lord told Nicodemus, “Ye must be born again.” A man must be godly through and through, and when he is so, his religion is not vain.

It is to that religion I want now to bear my testimony as faithfully as I can, “For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life.” I wish to give evidence in support of these four assertions, first, *it is no fiction*, secondly, *it is no trifle*, thirdly, *it is no folly*, fourthly, *it is no speculation*. May the Holy Spirit help me to speak and you to hear!

I. First then, concerning the religion that is our life, we declare that IT IS NO FICTION.

I speak on behalf of many who are present, and of an almost innumerable company who are not present, and who could not be present, when I bear witness that having tried and tested the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have not found it to be a fiction. We were told that there was *God the Father*, and we were bidden to address Him in prayer as our Father, and we have found that, “like as a father pitieth his children,” so the Lord has pitied us, and loved us, and cared for us. We must always speak as we find, and we testify that, since the day we sought His face, all the love of the best earthly father has been eclipsed by the love of God which He has manifested towards us.

God the Father a fiction? Why, in the lives of some of us, He is the greatest and most potent of all factors! We could do without anyone or anything else except our Father who is in heaven. We have often spoken with Him in prayer, and in His Word He has spoken back to us. In the time of trouble, it is

our joy to run to Him and cry, "Father," and in our hours of need, He has supplied all our wants "according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

It is no use for any man to say that there is no such being as God, if he has never tried Him. There is no power in that kind of negative evidence. The Irish prisoner said to the judge, "There are three men who swear that they saw me kill the man, but I can bring fifty men to swear that they did not see me kill him." The judge soon exposed that fallacy, for there was no argument in it.

If you say, "I do not know God, for I have never sought Him," we believe you, friend, and we believe you with the deepest grief, and we wish that you thought us as honest as you are yourself when we reply that we have sought God's face, and we are conscious, not by the sight of the eyes, or by the hearing of the ears, but by a new inward sense which God has given us, that in Him we live, and move, and have our being, and it is our joy to know that it is so.

Again, in the blessed Godhead *there is a second Person, namely, Jesus Christ*. Have we ever found Him to be real? It seems to be a current notion, even in the Christian church, that Jesus Christ is dead, but some of us believe in a living Christ, and well we may, for we went to Him all burdened with a sense of sin, and at the sight of Him on the cross, our burden disappeared, And many another time have we gone to Him whenever that sense of sin has returned, and He has comforted us exceedingly with the abundance of His mercy.

No Christ Jesus? Why, we have in secret had such fellowship with Him as a man has with his dearest friend, till we could doubt our own existence sooner than we could doubt the supernatural presence of Christ with true believers! It matters not if others say that it is not so with them, their sad experience does not prove how it is with us; and we bear our witness that, of all friends, the most real is Jesus of Nazareth, of all helpers and comforters, the truest and best we have ever found is Jesus Christ our Lord.

There yet remains another adorable Person in the Sacred Trinity—the *Holy Ghost*. Is there such a Person? Does He work upon the hearts of men? I speak now, not for dozens or hundreds, but for thousands, and for tens and hundreds of thousands, when I say that He has new-made us, He has illuminated us, He has comforted us, He has strengthened us, He has guided us, He has sanctified us. He is with us, and we are conscious of His presence and His power.

There are times when we are carried clean out of ourselves. We speak, you say, like men in a frenzy, though we are no more frenzied than you are. There are many of us who are no more fools than you are, and who could prove to you, in any matter of business or of science, that we are your equals in intellect, and we aver most certainly that there is a power beyond ourselves which has caused us to sing in the depths of sorrow, which has enabled us to rejoice when we have been racked with pain, which has made us sublimely calm when we have seemed to stand between the open jaws of death, and has carried us out of ourselves, so that we have freely forgiven those who did us wrong, and loved them all the better for their wrong doing, and sought their good the more, inasmuch as they have sought our hurt.

Such action as this proves the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. He is no fiction to us, and to know the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is to some of us the most real thing that ever was upon the face of the earth.

I could wish that some, who speak of godliness being all a fiction, had known what I once knew when I felt *conviction of sin*. I think that I am usually as cheerful as most men, but there was a time when no poor wretch on earth was more sunken in despair than I was. I knew that, though but young, I had broken God's righteous law, and had grievously sinned against Him, and under a sense of my guilt, I went about burdened day after day.

If I slept, I dreamt of an angry God, and thought that He would cast me forever into hell. When I attended to my daily calling, the dreadful thought of my sin haunted and followed me wherever I went. If anyone had said to me then, "Sin is a fiction," I could not have laughed him to scorn, for I was in no laughing humor, but I could have sat down and wept to think that anyone should fancy that this grim reality was, after all, but a matter of foolish fear or craven dread.

Conviction of sin was real enough to me, and so was *the joy of pardon*, for one day, I heard it said, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth,” and it was explained to me that Christ the Son of God did take my sin, and suffer for it, and that if I trusted Him, I might know that He had made a full atonement for me, and that I was clear of all guilt. I believed that message, it seemed to come to me straight from heaven, I looked to Jesus, and in a moment I leaped from the depths of despair to the heights of joyous confidence. I wanted to tell the assembled congregation that the witness of that humble preacher was true—that there was life in a look at the crucified One, and life at that moment for all who looked to Him.

If anyone had said to me then, “That deliverance of yours is not real,” I should have answered, “Let those who knew me only a week or two ago bear witness to the change it has wrought in me.” As the sorrow was real, so was the joy real too, and the alteration wrought in me was so great that I hope it helped to make others see its reality by my life and conduct in endeavoring to serve God.

And since then—I am still bearing my own personal testimony—what reality there has been *in all spiritual things*, by way of consoling, and comforting, and strengthening, and guiding, and delivering! Religion not real? Well, some of us would willingly let everything else go as long as we may keep our faith. You may ridicule all we know if you please, but you can never laugh us out of what we believe.

If you had been in prison for six months, no one would ever convince you that imprisonment was not a real thing, and if, on a sudden, you had been set at liberty, no one would make you believe that there was no difference between liberty and captivity, and that neither of those conditions existed. And in like manner, we believe, and are sure, that there is such a thing as conviction of sin and pardon for sin, for both these things are to us matters of fact.

Mark, yet further, that religion is to us no fiction, for since our conversion, we have received certain privileges which formerly we did not possess. I will mention only one, that is, *the privilege of speaking with God in prayer*, with the assurance that He will answer us. Does God answer prayer? He who has never tried it is not able to tell, and it is most unphilosophical for any man to say that such a thing cannot be when he has never tested it himself, but they who have tried and proved it are the ones who know.

I have sometimes wished that certain people could have seen some of the answers to prayer which I have received, I am sure they would have been surprised. Not long ago, a woman came to see me about joining the church. She was in great trouble, for her husband had gone away under rather sad circumstances, to Australia, or somewhere in that part of the globe, and she could not hear any news of him. I said to her, “Well, let us pray for him.” When I had prayed for his conversion, I prayed that he might come back to his wife, and I said to her, “Your husband will come back to you. I am persuaded that God has heard my prayer, so when he returns, bring him to see me in this room.”

As she went out, she said to the friend who had come with her, “How very positively Mr. Spurgeon speaks about the Lord answering his prayer! He says that my husband will certainly come back to me.” In a little over twelve months, that woman was in my vestry *with her husband*. I had forgotten the circumstances till she recalled them to me. About the time of our prayer, God had met with him on the sea, while he was reading one of my sermons, as a penitent sinner, he was brought to the feet of Jesus, and he came back and joined this church, and he is with us at this day in answer to that prayer.

“Oh!” says someone, “that is merely a coincidence.” Well, that woman did not think so, nor did her husband, and nor did I at the time, and I do not think so now. You may call it a coincidence if you like, but I call it an answer to prayer, and as long as I get such coincidences, I shall be perfectly satisfied to go on praying. “A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.”

I do not believe I should have had such coincidences if I had not asked for them, and as I get them daily, I shall stand to it, nor shall anything stop me from this glorying, that there is a God that hears prayer, and I challenge all men to try for themselves whether it is not so. If they come humbly to God, by Christ Jesus, and seek His face, they shall not seek in vain, and by and by, if they continue to wait upon Him in prayer, He will gird them with power, so that they shall ask and receive both for themselves and for others.

Another thing, I would like to mention, that makes me feel that the religion of Christ is no fiction, and that is *the many cases of conversion that are constantly witnessed among us*. If this were the time and place—and I do not think that it is, for I do not care about such an exhibition of trophies of God's grace, and bringing men out one by one in such a fashion—I could tell, not alone of the drunkard made sober, but of the man, passionate and violent in temper, becoming as meek and gentle as a child.

I could fetch him out from the congregation if you wanted to see him, and I could point you to the swearer, who at one time found it impossible to speak without an oath, but who from the moment of his conversion, was never again tried by that temptation. I could bring the thief who now knows what is his own, and what is his neighbor's, and who is honest as the day, and the unchaste, who were given up as if they could never be saved, who are now our sisters in Christ, and serving Him with modest, pure, simple hearts.

Show us something else that makes such changes as these, if you can, show us something else, if you can, that will meet the needs of the hardened and abandoned people in the back slums. We do not know where to find it, but we do know that wherever Christ is faithfully preached, such conversions are continually seen, and that morality and social order and everything that is pure and lovely are sustained and promoted by the Gospel of Jesus Christ wherever it is believed. These things are matters of fact, let those who care to do so resist the natural inference.

One of the strongest things which are no fiction is *the joy of believers when they die*. We have lately lost some of our dearest and best friends from the Tabernacle, some of our most earnest helpers have passed away, but oh, they have died gloriously! It has been a pleasure and a privilege to see them rejoicing while everybody else was weeping—to hear them triumphant when all around them were sorrowful—to behold them casting gleams of sunlight from their eyes even when those eyes were being glazed in death.

Give me a religion by which I can live, for that is the religion on which I can die. Give me that faith which will change me into the image of Christ, for then I need not be afraid to bear the image of death. God grant that you and I, dear friends, may know, as a matter of personal experience, that there is a solid truth in our religion, that it is indeed our life!

I know that there are some people who profess to disbelieve in religion altogether, yet, every now and then, they show that they do not doubt as much as they say they do. There was a traveler in the backwoods of America, who put up one night at a log cabin. The man who lived in the house was a very rough looking customer, and the traveler felt rather afraid of him, he had some money on him, and he was half inclined to go walking on instead of stopping there.

The master bade him come in, and eat with him, he did so, and after he had eaten, the man said, "Stranger, it is my custom always to read a chapter in the Bible, and to pray before I turn in." The traveler said that in a moment, he felt perfectly safe. He professed to be an infidel, but he showed that his infidelity was not very deep, for he believed in the man who worshipped his God, and was not afraid to sleep under his roof.

William Hone, who wrote the *Every Day Book*, was an unbeliever once, but he was traveling through Wales, and he saw a little Welsh girl at the door reading her Bible. He said to her, "Ah, my lassie, you are getting your task, I see!" "What did you say, sir?" she asked. "I said that you are learning your task." "What do you mean, sir? I am reading my Bible, you don't call that a task do you?" Well, he did think it was a task, it would have been one to him. She said, "Why, it is this reading my Bible that makes me happy all the day long! I am trying to learn some of it by heart, but that is no task to me, it is one of my greatest pleasures."

And William Hone afterwards confessed his own faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom he had been guided by the joy that he saw in that girl's face. He could not help believing that there must be something real in religion after all, it was life to her, and very soon it became life to him also.

II. I have taken so much time for the first part of my subject that I must be very brief with the rest. My second remark about true religion is that IT IS NO TRIFLE, “It is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life.”

Godliness is no trifle, dear friends, *because it concerns the soul*. If a thing only concerns the body, I do not call it a trifle, cleanliness, temperance, obedience to the laws of health—these are very proper things to be urged upon men. I wish that people in general were more careful of their bodies, but the soul is immortal, it will live when the body shall have moldered into dust and ashes, therefore, trifle not with your souls. If you must play the fool, let it be with your money bags. If you must speculate, let it be with your gold, but I pray you, venture not upon any risk with your immortal spirit, make sure work for eternity, “for what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

True religion also *concerns God*, and therefore it is not a trifling matter. If you must trifle with someone, trifle with your equal, even with your monarch, if you will, but never trifle with your God. He that made the heavens and the earth, and that holds all things in the hollow of His hand, is to be worshipped and revered, but never to be trifled with. Beware, ye that thus insult God, for trifling with Him will bring nothing but woe to you.

True religion also *concerns heaven and hell*, and these are not to be trifled with. True godliness is such a thing as no saint ever dares to trifle with. He strives to enter in at the strait gate, he throws his whole energy into the running of the Christian race. No true minister ever trifles with the truth he proclaims.

I have preached the Gospel now these thirty years and more, and some of you will scarcely believe it, but in my vestry behind that door, before I come to address the congregation in this Tabernacle, I tremble like an aspen leaf, and often, in coming down to this pulpit, have I felt my knees knock together—not that I am afraid of any one of my hearers, but I am thinking of that account which I must render to God, whether I speak His Word faithfully or not. On this service may hang the eternal destinies of many, O God, grant that we may all realize that this is a matter of the most solemn concern! May we all come to God by Christ Jesus that everything may be right with us now, and right for eternity! God grant that it may be!

These are things which must not be trifled with because their weight is incalculable, if we do trifle with them, there will be such damage as can never be remedied. A man, who becomes a bankrupt once, may start in business again, and yet grow rich. The commander who loses a battle, may gather together his troops again and yet lead them on to victory. But if the battle of this life is lost, woe worth the day! It is lost forever, there is no hope of any change to all eternity. It is not therefore, a matter to be trifled with, but a thing to be attended to with all our might.

I love to see Christian men in downright earnest. The other day, we lost a merchant from the City of London—a man of wealth and standing, and at the same time, a deacon of a Baptist church. Just a night or two before he died, he was at a church meeting. He was unwell, and they could have done without him, but as he was a deacon, he felt that he ought to be there. When his pastor said to him, “My dear sir, I think you should not be out,” he answered, “If I had not been out today in Gresham Street, about my own business, I would not have been out tonight about my Master’s business, but if I am well enough to look after my own affairs, I am surely well enough to attend to His.”

Let there always be with you, dear Christian people, this thought, that the Master’s business must never be pushed behind your own, but that it must always be first and foremost with you, “It is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life.” The highest point, the crown, the flower, the glory of your life, is your religion.

III. Now notice the next point, “It is not a vain thing,” that is to say, IT IS NO FOLLY.

First, *it is no folly to serve God*. Suppose, my brethren, it should turn out after all, that there is no God. Suppose that we should all die like dogs, then there would be nobody left to laugh at me for having served my God, that is quite clear. I am of the same mind as Cicero, when he spoke about the soul being immortal, and someone said to him, “Philosophers will laugh at you for saying that.” He replied, “They

may laugh while I live, I am used to that kind of treatment. And if I am dead, and they also are dead, it is quite clear that no dead philosopher will be able to laugh at me.”

We who believe in Christ have two strings to our bow. If we live again in another world, all will be well with us. If we do not, we shall be as well off as you will be. We are as happy as you are anyhow, we feel that we are far happier, so we are quite content to go on as we are. If it be folly to serve God, I am willing to be guilty of such folly as that. As I am His creature, I would serve my Creator, and as I am His child, I would serve my Father. I think it is the chief end of my being to glorify Him here, and then to enjoy Him forever in glory.

Further, *is it folly to be reconciled to God?* Is it folly to believe that there is eternal justice, and that if there be eternal justice, there will be a judgment, and that if there be a judgment, there will be punishment for sin? Is that folly? And is it folly to believe that Jesus Christ came and bore the punishment for those who trust Him, and that if He bore that punishment, then those for whom He bore it may go clear, and that if He bore it for those that believe in Him, then I, believing in Him, am clearly saved? Is that folly? It seems to me to be the most rational form of reasoning that I have ever come across yet, and to it will I stand. “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Next, *is it folly to be prepared to do your duty?* I venture to say that a man who is a true Christian is the readiest of any men that live to do his duty. I do not know whether it is ever a Christian’s duty to kill people, but if a man be a soldier, it is a wonder how often religion makes him a good soldier.

Read a bit of veritable history. An officer wanted to call out some troops in India for a certain duty, and he said, “At this time of night it is no use, for all the men are drunk, unless you send for Havelock’s saints, they will be all right.” And so they were. Some time after, it was rumored that one of the “saints” was drunk, and Havelock straightway made inquiry, and found that it was not one of his men, but another who bore the same name. The general said, “I do not know what Baptists are, but if Havelock’s men are Baptists, I wish the whole army were Baptists, for there are no other soldiers like them.”

There was a commander who found his army better fitted for conflict because they feared the Lord, and lifted up their hearts in prayer to Him, and never turned aside to drunkenness and other evil ways. God grant that you, dear friends, may have a religion that will make you ready to do your duty, whatever it may be!

Besides, *is it not true wisdom to be prepared for your eternal destiny?* It is wise some say, to look to present things, so it is to a certain extent, but it is wise to look at present things in the light of the future. A man was dying—dying without hope, and without much concern either, and his lawyer was called in to make his will. He was willing away all his property, and his wife and his little girl stood by his bed, and heard him giving his instructions. He said, “As to the home, you know dear, I leave that to you,” so the lawyer put it down. His little girl said, “Then, pa, you haven’t got a home of your own where you are going.” That sentence touched him, he had forgotten that matter, but by God’s grace, he was led to seek and to find the home eternal.

It must be a wise thing, not only to have a home of your own here, but to have another and a better home to go to when you die. A person said one day, “I know an infidel who lately died in perfect happiness and peace.” “But,” asked a workman who stood by “was he in his senses?” “Yes,” replied the speaker, “and he died in perfect peace.” “Then,” said the workman, “he must have had a very miserable time while he was alive.” The other asked, “What do you mean?” He answered, “I will tell you what I mean. I have a very good, kind wife—the best woman that ever lived, and I have some dear children too, and they are my comfort and joy, and if I had to leave them, and go away, I did not know where, and did not know whether I should live again or not, I should feel it the most awful thing in all the world to die, and I am sure that my wife would break her heart over it, But,” he said, “now I can die in perfect peace because I feel that I am going home to my Father and to my Savior, and my wife can part with me in peace because she knows that I am going where I shall receive even greater love than she can give me.

But I think that infidel must have had a scolding wife, and that was why he was glad to die, I cannot understand it on any other ground.”

No more can I, it looks to me to be a most unreasonable kind of composure for a man to lie down to die and say, “I do not know where I am going, I expect I shall be annihilated.” I shudder at the thought, I could not die like that. But when I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him, then I can with reason as well as with faith surrender myself into my Heavenly Father’s hands.

IV. Now lastly, let me say to you, concerning true religion, that IT IS NO SPECULATION.

There are a great many speculations nowadays. If any of you want to lose your money, or are particularly anxious never to see it again, or want to have a very limited view of it, I advise you to put it into a company. It will soon disappear, depend upon that.

There are many speculations, and there are many people who become speculators, but there are some things that are certainties, and here is one. *If any man will trust himself with Jesus Christ, he shall be saved.* He may for some time be in darkness, but if he will fully trust himself with Christ, unless God can lie, and unless Christ can be defeated, such a man must and shall be saved, and he shall know it too. There is not in hell a single man who can say that he trusted Christ, and yet that Christ did not save him, and I hardly think that there is anywhere on earth a man so base as to say that. At any rate, if he did say it, I should take leave not to believe what he said.

The process of salvation is very different in different cases. About a fortnight ago, there stood in Cheapside a young man reading one of my sermons which had attracted his attention. As he was reading it, he came across this passage—“If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are saved now. But I want you to project your faith further, and to believe in Jesus Christ for the whole of your life, for if you do so, you shall not only be saved now, but you shall infallibly be saved forever.” Then followed the text, “I give unto them eternal life,” and this comment upon it—“Now, eternal life cannot come to an end. ‘He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.’ Everlasting life cannot come to an end, it is a thing that lasts forever. Believe for everlasting life, and you have it, you are saved forever.”

The young man said, “Standing there, I did believe just as I was told. I trusted Christ, and I believed then that in Him I had everlasting life. The next minute, I felt, ‘Oh, what a glorious thing this is! How I love Christ who has done this great thing for me! What is there that I can do to serve Him? What sin is there that I would not give up?’ Then,” he said, “I said to myself, as I walked on, ‘Why, I am saved! I am sure I am, because now I love Christ, now I want to give up sin, and now I want to serve Him.’” And was not that a sure proof of his being saved, because he saw the greatness of divine love to him, and this made him grateful, and that gratitude turned him right round, and made a new man of him?

This is how Christ can save you also. Suppose you have been addicted to drunkenness, and that you are convinced of the evil of it. You go to Christ, and He forgives you, then you say, “Now I am forgiven, oh, how I love my Savior! I will never go back to my cups again, I have done with my old companions, I will go and seek out other people that love Christ, and I will join with them if they will have me; and I will see what Christ expects me to do, and I will do it, for I will do everything for Him who has done so much for me.”

That is salvation—a change of character—a deliverance from that which held you in bondage, an entrance into the blessed liberty of loving God and wanting to be holy. Oh, that we might each one of us know that blessedness! It is no speculation, you do not believe in Christ haphazardly. If you believe in Christ, heaven and earth shall pass away, but His Word shall never pass away, you are saved, as surely as God is God. He that believeth in Christ shall be saved now, and in the hour of death and at the day of judgment, and forever and ever.

Now, dear friends, in closing, I should like to say that *this salvation is suitable for all whom I am addressing.* Many of you know this, and you have been praying that others may know it too. This salvation is suitable for poor men. If you are very poor, is it not time that you were rich unto God? And if you have the hard side of the hill in this world, why should you not have life eternal, and joy and bliss

in the world to come? It is also equally suitable for the rich man, for if you have not somewhere to go when you die, I pity you. To leave your parks and gardens and mansions and estates, to go from Dives' table to Dives' hell will be a horrible thing for you, my lord, and for your ladyship, if that should happen to be your case. You want a Savior, most certainly, rich as well as poor.

This salvation exactly suits you, my aged friend over yonder. "Oh!" say you, "I am too fixed in my habits, I am afraid I shall never be saved, I am getting quite grey and very old." Well, then, this is the very thing to make you young. "Ye must be born again." "Can a man be born again when he is old?" That is what Nicodemus asked, and Christ told him that he could be. He can put new life into you, so that you shall be a child even if you are a hundred years old, and you shall joy and rejoice in God that, in your latter days, you have come to Him as a child, and received a Father's love.

"Ah! but it won't suit me," says a young man, "I should like to see a little life." That is exactly what I want you to see, and you will never see life till you see Christ. "Oh, but I want to be happy!" you say. I know you do, and so do I, and I should like you to be happy. "I never believe in cats being cats before they are kittens, I like to see young people full of joy and full of merriment." I agree with you, but I tell you that there is more joy experienced by a Christian in five minutes than by a worldling in five hundred years. When a saint lives near to God—

*"His joys divinely grow,
Unspeakable like those above,
And heaven begins below."*

Talk of life and happiness, we have it who sought the Savior in our youth, and have never turned aside from Him since. This salvation suits everybody, it suits you, if you are a most moral person, and it will be your life. You are like a statue of marble now, very beautiful and fair to look upon, but you have no warm life of love to God within you. Oh, if we could only make that marble live!

"Oh, that those lips had language!"

But the grace of God can put life into your dead morality. Perhaps I am speaking to some who are immoral, if that is your case, this salvation is just the thing for you. The religion of Jesus suits publicans and harlots, it is just the thing for the felon and the depraved. Someone here, perhaps, is half ashamed to be in this congregation, you are the very one I am sent after tonight—the lost sheep. It is you the Shepherd is seeking, He can afford to leave the ninety-and-nine that went not astray, but you lost sheep—you, lost woman, lost man—you are the very one that Jesus loves, for "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Come and cast yourself into His arms by simple trust, for that is faith. Trust Jesus, just as I lean my whole weight upon this rail, lean on Him your whole weight, fall flat down on His promise of pardon, lie right down on the rock, trust in nothing of your own, but trust Christ for everything, and you are saved. God grant that this may be the happy lot of us all, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—136 (SONG 1), 539, 546

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.